LIBRARY

LIBRARY

BOROUGH OF OKEHAMPTON.

ANNUAL REPORT

of Medical Officer of Health for the year ending 31st December 1944.

Public Health Staff:

Medical Officer of Health:

E.D.ALLEN-PRICE, M.D. (State Medicine) M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.Birmingham

Sanitary Officer

R.ALAN BRUNSKILL, D.P., R.S.I.

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit an abbreviated Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1944.

This is my first Annual Report to your Council since returning from military duty and my thanks are due to Lt. Col. Hughes who undertook the office during my absence.

The general health of the Borough remained good throughout the year. Notifiable diseases were very low indeed and this is particularly gratifying when one considers the congested condition of the town during the first half of the period. It is also particularly satisfactory to note that the births greatly exceed the deaths and is in most striking contrast with pre-war experience.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area in acres	... ...	806
Population, 1931 census	...	3,307
Estimated population, mid 1944	...	3,927

VITAL STATISTICS.

	Male	Female	Total		England and Wales
Live Births	41	43	84		
Illegitimate	9	9	18		
Birth rate per 1,000 resident population				21.2	17.6
Still births - 2. Still birth rate				24.0	0.5
Deaths. Male 28. Female 34 = 62					
Death rate per 1,000 resident population				15.0	11.6
Corrected death rate using old factor				12.0	
Deaths from puerperal causes				0.0	
Deaths of infants under one year				4	
Death rate of infants under one year				47	46

The chief causes of death of the townsfolk was :-

Infectious diseases:

Syphilis	1
Influenza	3

General Diseases:

Cancer	10	
Cerebral haemorrhage	4	
Heart disease	21	
Bronchitis	4	
Ulcer of Stomach	1	
Other digestive diseases	2	
Nephritis	3	
Congenital malformations	2	
Violent causes	3	
All other causes	8	Total 62.

The great majority of deaths occurred at an advanced age.

Section B.

The general provision of the health services remained as in previous years. The St.John Ambulance Brigade have acquired a new ambulance and provided an efficient service both locally and for longer journeys with serious cases. It would in my opinion be advantageous to all concerned should the Borough Council take a financial interest in this necessary service.

Section C.

Sanitary Circumstances.

Inspections were carried out throughout the year either in a routine manner or when called upon to deal with a particular case. A full return will be found in your inspectors report which will be included as an appendix.

Water Supply. The water supply to the Borough can be looked upon after passing through the filters as entirely satisfactory as regards either purity or quantity. Unfortunately the work of the filters is frequently vitiated by deposit from the town mains which renders the clear filtered water turbid and unfit. Many complaints are received from this cause and I would recommend your Council bearing this matter in mind when a suitable occasion arises.

Refuse disposal. The care and maintenance of the town tip leaves much to be desired. As soon as labour is available it is advisable to control the tipping and bury all fermentable material to prevent fly breeding.

Section D.

Housing.

Steps have been taken to acquire a suitable site for post-war rehousing which will proceed when man power and materials are available.

Section E.

Inspection of Food.

Inspections were made in a routine manner of provision shops, bakehouses and other food premises.

Section F.

Prevalence of infectious diseases.

The incidence of infectious disease was very low throughout the year.

In the late winter and early spring influenza occurred and caused three deaths.

Notifiable Diseases.

Whopping Cough	...	15 cases
Measles	...	9 "
Scarlet fever	...	3 "
Chicken Pox	...	13 "
Erysipelas	...	1 "
Diphtheria	...	0 "

With regard to Diphtheria prophylaxis it is considered that the response from parents is satisfactory. It is estimated that of the 300 children under five years of age that 54% were completely immunized on 31st December and of the 900 school children 98% were protected by the same date.

Tuberculosis.

Six new cases of this disease were notified during the year but no death was recorded.

On 31st December the following cases remained on the register:

Pulmonary		Non Pulmonary		
Males	Females	Males	Females	Total
9	3	9	5	26

The proportion of non pulmonary to pulmonary cases in my opinion is far too high and once again raises the problem of tuberculous milk. The people who are best able to judge are of the conviction that all milk should be boiled or pasteurised before given to children. With this

opinion your Medical Officer unhesitatingly concurs.

In concluding I would once again thank the Mayor and Corporation for the ready hearing my proposals receive.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

E.D.ALLEN-PRICE

A P P E N D I X

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1944, in condensed form.

Sanitary Circumstances

Water Supply.

The sources of supply remain as in 1939 from two intakes at Newbridge on Black-a-van Stream and Yes Tor on Red-a-van Stream. Supplies have been adequate for requirements throughout the year.

Rainfall. The rainfall on the watershed was rather above average. At the filter station it was average. Comparative figures are given below. I have again to thank Councillor S.R.Harry for some of these figures. Readings are taken daily at the Filter Station.

	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940
Cranmere	86.6	83.95	77. 8	65. 9	75. 6
Newbridge	63.45	65.60	64.15	56.15	63. 2
Filter Station	51.42	57.92	48.47	47.42	53.22
Dry days (no rain)	178	142	174	177	

The driest months were May, February and April and the wettest November and October. Falls of over 1" in one day were recorded in June, August, October (2), November (2) and December.

Intake Mains. Though lying in the artillery practice areas the intake mains have escaped serious damage and functioned properly.

Filtration and Treatment. The filtration plant has been in continuous operation throughout the year and has worked well and with only minor intermittent faults which have been remedied by the attendant in daily attendance. Filters are washed daily and kept up to a high operational standard. This is essential owing to the intake of peaty solids. Chemical treatment ensures good clear colourless water for distribution. The air compressor engine had minor repairs after five years' working.

Distribution. The zoned distribution system continues to operate with the minimum of trouble giving a standardised pressure in the central area and in so doing maintaining the pressure in the high level zones. Extensions were carried out to give new supplies to 12 houses

in the Oaklands area. Additional supplies in large quantities were provided again throughout the year for the large service camp.

Mains were regularly flushed and leak inspections continuously carried out. Leaks were found and repaired on 60 Corporation pipes, 4 Corporation mains, 123 consumers pipes. The clearance of service pipes by force pump previously purchased has produced effective improvements in supplies in most instances.

For the past three years a plumber has been employed as filter attendant and this arrangement has proved successful in maintaining and servicing the undertaking.

Rivers and Streams. The two rivers, East and West Ockment are self cleansing and have generally been very clean. Serious pollution to the East Ockment was caused by the discharge of liquor from the gas works. This was dealt with temporarily by disposal in barrels and screening and purification tanks are being constructed for ultimate discharge to the sewers.

Drainage and Sewerage. Sewerage defects have remained in good condition and no major defects have arisen. The disposal works have functioned satisfactorily. Since the last report a main sewer to deal with the Oaklands estate and camp area has been constructed.

Public Cleansing. Refuse collection and disposal have been carried out directly by the Corporation. Collections are daily and weekly owing to labour shortage and salvage collections.

In addition regular salvage collections are made fortnightly. The collection of metals, tins, bottles and rubber as salvage were discontinued during the year. Waste paper, cardboard and textiles are now collected. Edible kitchen waste is collected in communal street bins and sold for pig feeding. Bones are also disposed of in this way.

Sanitary Inspection: Visits as follows:

Houses	33	Tip	31
do. re housing	14	Tents and vans	2
Drainage	17	Schools	9
Water Closets	5	Infectious Disease	2
Sewerage	9	Rodents	4
Water Supply	74	Miscellaneous	11
Rivers	12	Informal Notices	17
Refuse Removal	17	Remedied	14
Salvage	79		

Infectious Diseases and Disinfection. Houses have been disinfected for Infectious Diseases as follows :-

Scarlet Fever	2
Other cases	3

Two houses have also been disinfected.

Food. Thirty condemnation certificates mainly covering canned and other imported meats were issued, and four samples of milk were taken all of which passed.

Smoke Abatement. One minor complaint was dealt with and the standard was good.

Bakehouses, Meat and Food Shops. Have all been well maintained and conducted and no action has been necessary.

Offensive Trades. Two establishments, a manure works and a marine store have been well conducted and no action has been necessary.

Fish Frying. Two fish frying shops have owing to the food situation largely been engaged in potato frying rather than fish and have been well conducted.

Swimming Pools. The swimming pool just outside the Borough boundary has had improvements and repairs carried out and its water supply has been much improved by extended supply pipe lines. Both this and the childrens paddling pool are supplied by continuous running water.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

R.ALAN-BRUNSKILL